

MASSACHUSETTS STATE POLICE FORENSIC SERVICES GROUP

TRAVEL & TRAINING GUIDELINES

Version 1.0



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Massachusetts State Police Forensic Services Group
Travel and Training Guidelines (Version 1.0)

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1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of these guidelines is to standardize the manner in which travel and training requests and reimbursements are handled within the Forensic Services Group. Compliance with these guidelines will ensure that necessary information is distributed to all persons or sections needing it (e.g., FSG Administrative Section, FSG Quality Assurance, GHQ, and the Executive Office of Public Safety).

2 DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 **Administrative Sections** – A group of unit(s) and support personnel within the Forensic Services Group (FSG) providing functions such as facility support, human resources support, information technology support, and fiscal support to the FSG.
- 2.2 **Administrative Unit** – A unit having responsibility for fiscal affairs within the FSG. Relative to travel & training, the Administrative Unit tracks financial aspects of training requests and reimbursements and facilitates reimbursement through the General Headquarters (GHQ) Fiscal Section.
- 2.3 **CLS** – see Crime Laboratory System
- 2.4 **Course Evaluation Form** – A form requested by the Deputy Superintendent of the Department that employees should complete upon return from authorized training for which they have received a TAF#. The form is a means of documenting that the employee attended the training and also records the educational value of the course. The forms should be sent with Reimbursement Request paperwork for eventual filing at HQ.
- 2.5 **Cover Letter** – A request letter, typed on Departmental letterhead using the standard “to/from” format, which includes pertinent information and justification for the travel request.
- 2.6 **Crime Laboratory System (CLS)** – A group of forensic sections within the FSG primarily comprised of civilian scientists that includes Forensic Biology (DNA, Criminalistics, Crime Scene Response, CODIS) and Forensic Chemistry (Controlled Substances, Toxicology, Trace Analysis, Fire and Explosives).

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- 2.7 Departmental ID Number – A unique number assigned to each employee of the Department of State Police. Departmental ID numbers are usually 4 digits for sworn members of the Department and have a prefix of “C” for civilian employees. This number (not the HRCMS number) should appear in the designated area (e.g., “ID#”) of the TES travel request.
- 2.8 DIS – see Division of Investigative Services
- 2.9 Division of Investigative Services – A division within the MSP that includes investigative units and the FSG.
- 2.10 EOPS – see Executive Office of Public Safety
- 2.11 Executive Office of Public Safety (EOPS) – State authority having oversight of the Massachusetts State Police and thus the FSG.
- 2.12 Forensic Services Group (FSG) – A group of forensic sections and systems comprised of the Crime Lab System, the Forensic Services System, the Forensic Support Sections, and the Administrative Sections.
- 2.13 Forensic Services System (FSS) – A group of forensic sections within the FSG primarily comprised of sworn examiners that includes the Crime Scene Services Section (CSSS), the Firearms Identification Section (FIS) and the Digital Evidence and Multi-media Section (DEMS).
- 2.14 Forensic Support Sections – A group of units within the FSG that provide specific support to sections and systems with the FSG or perform calibration functions. The FSS is comprised of the Forensic Support Unit, the Evidence Control Unit, the Case Management Unit, and the Office of Alcohol Testing.
- 2.15 FSG – see Forensic Services Group
- 2.16 FSS – see Forensic Services System
- 2.17 HRCMS Number – A unique number, usually 6 digits, assigned to each state employee. The HRCMS number is used by the Payroll Section to affect reimbursements. This number needs to appear on the Travel Voucher in order for reimbursements to occur.
- 2.18 MSP – Massachusetts State Police
- 2.19 Receipts – Documents that acknowledge that something (e.g., material or

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- service) was received and that indicate the amount paid for the item or service.
- 2.20 Supporting Documentation – Documents including brochures, agendas, outlines, printed estimates, and other detailed information from the trainer that describe the requested training.
- 2.21 TAF – see Travel Authorization Form
- 2.22 TAF1 – see Travel Authorization Form 1
- 2.23 TAF# – An approval code issued by the Deputy Superintendent of the Department and used for tracking authorized travel and training requests. TAF#s for the Forensic Services Group usually have the format T-[fiscal year]C-[chronological number] (e.g., T-07C-35). The TAF# is also used by the GHQ Fiscal Section to determine the funding source for the approved training expenses.
- 2.24 TES – see Travel Endorsement Sheet
- 2.25 Travel Authorization Form (TAF) – A required State form that is the means of recording the *details* of a travel request, including the travel destination, justification for the travel, estimated expenses for the travel, and approval for the expenses. The current version is available on Docushare. Normally, this form must be completed and submitted to the Commander of Forensic Services for approval within 35 days before the requested travel.
- 2.26 Travel Endorsement Sheet (TES) – A required Departmental form that is the means of recording *approval* for the requested travel. The current version is available on Docushare. Normally, this form must be completed and submitted to the Commander of Forensic Services for approval within 35 days before the requested travel.
- 2.27 Travel Authorization Form 1 (TAF1) – A required Departmental form that is the means of recording *expenses that exceed 15%* of the amount originally requested on the TAF. The current version of this form is available on Docushare.
- 2.28 Travel Voucher – A required Departmental form that is the means of requesting *reimbursements* for approved travel. The current version is available on Docushare. This form should be completed as soon as possible after the travel.

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3 APPROVALS

- 3.1 For FSG staff in respective units, all of the following individuals must approve travel and training requests before staff embark on the travel:

Crime Laboratory System	Forensic Support Sections	Administrative Sections	Forensic Services System
Section Supervisor*	Section Supervisor*	Section Supervisor*	Training Officer*
Lead Supervisor, Technical Leader or appropriate authority*	n/a	n/a	Section Commander*
Crime Lab System Director	Forensic Support Sections Commander (Detective Lieutenant)	FSG Director of Administrative Services	Director of Forensic Services System (Detective Captain)
FSG Director of Administrative Services**	FSG Director of Administrative Services**	FSG Director of Administrative Services**	FSG Director of Administrative Services**
Commander, Forensic Services (Major)	Commander, Forensic Services (Major)	Commander, Forensic Services (Major)	Commander, Forensic Services (Major)
Division Commander, DIS (Lieutenant Colonel)	Division Commander, DIS (Lieutenant Colonel)	Division Commander, DIS (Lieutenant Colonel)	Division Commander, DIS (Lieutenant Colonel)
Deputy Superintendent, MSP (Lieutenant Colonel)	Deputy Superintendent, MSP (Lieutenant Colonel)	Deputy Superintendent, MSP (Lieutenant Colonel)	Deputy Superintendent, MSP (Lieutenant Colonel)
Executive Office of Public Safety	Executive Office of Public Safety	Executive Office of Public Safety	Executive Office of Public Safety

- *Approval should be indicated on the cover letter, not on the TES.
- **Approval should be indicated on TES form only to validate available funds.

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- 3.2 Notification of approval for all travel/training will be forwarded from the Office of the Deputy Superintendent to the appropriate Division Commander or designee. It is the responsibility of the Division Commander or designee to notify their respective personnel that the travel has/has not been approved.

4 TIMELINES FOR SUBMITTING REQUESTS

- 4.1 Requests should be completed and submitted through channels to the Commander of Forensic Services (Major) for approval at least 35 days before the requested travel to allow sufficient time for other approvals (e.g., EOPS) before the scheduled training.
- 4.2 Delinquent requests may be denied.

5 REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION FOR TRAVEL & TRAINING REQUESTS

- 5.1 The following documents must be included in the request packet:
- Travel Authorization Form (TAF)
 - Travel Endorsement Sheet (TES)
 - Supporting Documentation
 - Cover letter from requesting employee
 - Cover letter from employee's supervisor (optional)
- 5.2 When submitting the final package for approval, staff should ensure that the forms are submitted in the following order:
- Cover Letter(s)
 - TES
 - TAF

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- All other attachments
- 5.3 Request packets that are missing any of the above documents may be returned to employee and as a result may become delinquent (see Section 4 of these guidelines).

6 TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION FORM (TAF)

- 6.1 The TAF is a required State form that is the means of recording the details of the travel, including travel destination, justification for the travel, estimated expenses for the travel, and approval for the expenses.
- 6.2 The current version of the TAF is available on Docushare and is hyperlinked below in Section 17 References.
- 6.3 The TAF must be included in the request packet.
- 6.4 Travelers need not complete Sections 2, 3, 4, or 5 of the TAF. These will be completed by the Deputy Superintendent's Office.
- 6.5 Section 9 of the TAF must contain a detailed description and compelling justification for the travel.
- Travelers should use Section 9 of the TAF to clearly notify the reader why the request is an appropriate use of the taxpayer money and why the travel is necessary. Simply writing that it is "important for career development" or "participation in the annual professional organization that (you) belong to" is not adequate. Travelers should be aware that despite the fact that expenses may be fully covered by a non-State Police source, the travel will be on state time and thus the request for travel must meet the same justification test.
 - Forensic Services Group travel requests will receive scrutiny and final approval for travel from the Undersecretary of Forensic Services at the Executive Office of Public Safety. Travelers must ensure that any requests that require final approval of the Undersecretary have the necessary information justifying the request. Writing "see attached" in Section 9 of the TAF is not sufficient; travelers must inform the reader on the TAF why the travel is necessary without guiding the reader through pages of potential conference details. This burden is the employee's, not those approving the request.

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- In the lower right-hand corner of Section 9 of the TAF, travelers should indicate the “Org Code” from which the travel will be billed using the following codes:

2501 – FIS

2510 – CL

2515 – DEMS

2516 – QA

2520 – CSSS

Fed Grant – Name

6.6 Travel authorization is commonly related to one of the following types of activities. The examples of justifications which follow must be modified to fit the exact situation for which a TAF is being submitted.

6.6.1 *Technical Competency* development and documentation including:

- Symposia, workshops and short-courses related to a specific kind of forensic examination, for which focused seminars are required.
- Instrumentation training courses provided by manufacturers, academic or professional membership groups to insure proper application of an instrument
- Procedural training courses provided by technical experts, academic or professional membership groups to insure that proper forensic techniques are employed

6.6.2 *Professional participation* in regional or national forums to enhance the quality of practices within the Department's FSG, and/or by all practitioners of a forensic sub-discipline, including:

- Participation as an inspector performing accreditation review of a forensic service-related organization (such as IAI, AFTE, ASCLD/LAB, ISO, FEPAC, etc)
- Participation in professional groups involved in the enhancement of methods, practices, scope, interpretations and/or legal defensibility of a given forensic sub-discipline or forensic organizational structure (such as SWGs, TWGs, voluntary RDT&E groups, IACP, ASCLD, NEAFS, SOFT, AAFS, etc)
- Participation in professional certification organizations which develop and implement qualification standards for practitioners who perform specific forensic examinations, interpretations and testimonies (such as ABTF, ABC, IAI, AFTE, FTCB, etc)
- Such travel requests may be related to initial/annual/periodic training and programmatic updates related to such accreditation standardization or certification activities.

6.6.3 *Outreach* through regional or national forums to improve the Department's ability to meet or exceed client organization and agency representative expectations, including:

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- Attendance and/or participation in workshops/working groups/meetings being hosted related to investigative or forensic procedures, reconstructions, organizational specifications or context determinations (such as NIJ, AFQAM, NEAFS, AAFS, IAI, ABFT, SOFT, AFTE, IACP, NAME, etc)
 - Participation in training or teaching forums to improve stakeholder and/or public understanding of FSG operations and activities and enhance support or the Department's missions and goals (such as MDAA, NDAA, college/university coursework and training programs, victim/witness groups, RDT&E groups, etc)
 - Participation as an instructor to implement professional skills, improve forensic qualities, accelerate training readiness and maximize casework flexibility of students, thereby lowering the ultimate cost to the Department to maintain and enhance FSG operations (such as formal scholastic institutions, academic and professional training centers, national programs, etc)
- 6.7 In Section 10 of the TAF, when estimating expenses, it is the responsibility of the travelers to ensure that they ascertain all applicable taxes and fees as they pertain to airline tickets, hotel reservations, car rentals, etc.
- The estimated expenses must be completed, even if the cost will be paid by some other agency (federal government, grants, etc); however, staff should indicate who will be paying for the expenses.
 - All estimated expenses should be included, such as:
 - Airfare
 - Lodging
 - Car rentals
 - Meals
 - Gasoline
 - Tolls
 - Other
 - If the majority of the expenses will be covered by a grant, the expenses paid for by the grant must be listed in the 4th column (Other Funds). Any expenses such as meals, etc that are being paid for by the Department must be listed in the 2nd column.
 - When listing funds to be paid for by a grant under Other Funds, the grant number should be listed next to the words "Other Funds".

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- 6.8 Each requesting employee should complete his/her own TAF. If employees are traveling together, additional names should be listed in the appropriate area of the TAF but each employee should request expenses separately.
- 6.9 Once the travel is approved, the employee will be notified of the assigned TAF#. The TAF# is the approval code that the Deputy Superintendent assigns to authorized travel, based upon the TAF. This code must be referenced when submitting reimbursements.

7

TRAVEL ENDORSEMENT SHEET (TES)

- 7.1 The TES is a required Departmental form that is the means of recording approval for the requested travel.
- 7.2 The current version is available on Docushare and is hyperlinked below in Section 17 References.
- 7.3 This form must be included in the request packet.
- 7.4 The ID# cell of the TES should show the employee's Departmental ID#. The Employee's HRCMS number should NOT be listed in this area.
- Civilian employees of the Department typically have an ID# beginning with the prefix "C" followed by up to 4 numbers.
 - Sworn employees of the Department typically have an ID# of 4 numbers.
- 7.5 The first signature on the TES should be the appropriate Director:
- for staff assigned to the Crime Lab System, the Crime Lab Director
 - for staff assigned to the Forensic Services System, the Deputy Commander of Forensic Services (Forensic Services System Director, Detective Captain)
 - for staff assigned to the Forensic Support Sections, the Forensic Support Sections Commander (Detective Lieutenant)
 - for staff assigned to the Administrative Sections, the Forensic Services Group Director of Administrative Services

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- 7.6 Additional MSP signatures on the TES should be the FSG Director of Administrative Services, the Commander of Forensic Services (Major), the Commander of the Division of Investigative Services (Lieutenant Colonel), the Deputy Superintendent of the Department, and others as deemed appropriate. The travel requests will ultimately be submitted to EOPS for approval, upon which EOPS signature(s) will be added to the TES.
- 7.7 Section supervisors should not sign the TES. Section supervisors should indicate their approval or denial of the training request on the cover letter.

8 COVER LETTER

- 8.1 A cover letter is a request letter, typed on Departmental letterhead using the standard "to/from" format, which includes pertinent information and justification for the travel request.
- 8.2 The cover letter should describe the training requested and should be specific. For example, when an employee requests to attend a conference and workshops at the conference, the cover letter should include a detailed description of the specific workshops the employee will attend as well as a description of the overall conference. If possible, the total number of hours of training should also be included. The cover letter should contain details and justification for travel as outlined in Section 6.5 and 6.6 (Travel Authorization Form).
- 8.3 The cover letter must reference the funding source, including the name and the "Org Code", from which the travel and training will be billed. The "Org Codes" are listed in Section 6.5 (Travel Authorization Form) of these guidelines. The FSG Administrative Unit should be consulted when there are questions about the appropriate "Org Code" to be referenced.
- 8.4 Cover letters should be addressed to individuals in the employee's chain of command within the Forensic Services Group. The name of the highest person in the chain (e.g., Major) should appear at the top of the list.
- 8.5 Cover letters may contain justification for travel of one or more employees traveling to the same location, but the TAFs and TESs accompanying the cover letter should be completed for individual employees.
- 8.6 Supervisors receiving travel and training requests should indicate their approval or denial by initialing and dating next to their name in the "To" area

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of the cover letter. If approved by the supervisor, the training request packet, including the cover letter, should then be forwarded to the next person in the chain for approval or denial of the request. Training requests that are denied will be returned to the employee.

- 8.7 Supervisors may choose to write an additional cover letter to justify the request, but this is not required.
- 8.8 Cover letters describing the travel and training requests are required even if costs are paid in part or full by another agency.
- 8.9 Cover letters should contain a disclaimer of influence by any other agency, whether the funding source for the travel/training is the MSP, another agency or private.

9 SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

- 9.1 Supporting documents include brochures, agendas, outlines, printed estimates, and other detailed information from the trainer that describes the requested training.
- 9.2 Supporting documents must be included in the request packet.
- 9.3 Supporting documents should be as detailed as possible and fully describe the training, workshops and associated costs.
- 9.4 Additional documents such as MapQuest print-outs, rental car estimates, and airline estimates may be included in the request packet but are not required.

10 TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION FORM 1 (TAF1)

- 10.1 A TAF1 is a Departmental form that is the means of recording expenses that exceed 15% of the amount originally requested on the TAF.
- 10.2 The current version of the TAF1 is available on Docushare and is hyperlinked below in Section 17 References.
- 10.3 A TAF1 should be completed:

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- If costs are expected to exceed the requested amount by more than 15% (e.g., airfare was under-estimated in the original request, and once the flight was booked the costs were greater than originally requested)
 - If costs incurred while at the training exceeded 15%
- 10.4 TAF1 forms should be completed as soon as possible once it is known that the costs exceed 15% of the original request.
- 10.5 TAF1 forms should be approved in a similar manner as a TAF.

11 REIMBURSEMENT PROCEDURE

- 11.1 Reimbursement requests for approved travel should be submitted to the FSG Administrative Unit for reimbursement. FSG travel vouchers should not be sent directly to the GHQ Fiscal Section.
- 11.2 The Administrative Unit may delay reimbursement processing until all needed documents are present (including the Course Evaluation Form, located in the Forensic Services area of Docushare and linked herein in Section 17 References).
- 11.3 All travel reimbursements will be paid through GHQ Payroll Section, facilitated by the FSG Administrative Unit. Reimbursements will appear in the employee's paycheck, not as separate payment. Instructors and training vendors will not be paid directly unless specific authorization has been granted.

12 REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION FOR REIMBURSEMENTS

- 12.1 The following documents must be included in the reimbursement request packet:
- Travel Voucher, signed by the employee and the approving authority
 - Receipts, except meal receipts
 - Mileage/MapQuest printout, if appropriate

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- Course Evaluation Form, if appropriate
- 12.2 Reimbursement packets that are missing the above documents may be returned to employee and this may delay reimbursement.

13 TRAVEL VOUCHERS

- 13.1 A Travel Voucher is a required Departmental form that is the means of requesting reimbursements for approved travel.
- 13.2 The current version of a Travel Voucher is available on Docushare and is hyperlinked below in Section 17 References.
- 13.3 This form should be completed and submitted as soon as possible after the travel.
- 13.4 The ID# cell of the Travel Voucher should show the employee's HRCMS ID#. HRCMS numbers are typically 6 numbers.
- Travel vouchers will result in reimbursement directly into the employee's paycheck, not as a separate payment. The HRCMS number that is used for Paystation is needed to facilitate this with the GHQ Payroll Section.
- 13.5 Travel vouchers should contain the assigned TAF#.
- The GHQ Fiscal Section references this number during reimbursement processing, to ensure that trainings are paid from the approved accounts.
- 13.6 Travel vouchers should be completed in a manner consistent with GHQ Fiscal Section requirements (e.g., hotel expenses listed in the appropriate cell, etc). Calculations should be included on the Travel Voucher, when appropriate.
- 13.7 If travel voucher requests include reimbursement for mileage, the request should include odometer readings and print-outs of the mileage distances according to internet resources (e.g. MapQuest). The requirements are further described in Section 15 of these guidelines.

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- 13.8 The requested reimbursement amount should not exceed 15% of the total requested cost. If costs incurred exceeded or are expected to exceed the requested amount by more than 15%, a TAF1 must be completed and approved in a similar manner as a TAF.
- 13.9 Travel vouchers should be approved and signed by an authorized person, including but not limited to, as appropriate, the Section Commander, the Lead Supervisor or Technical Leader, the Director (CLS or FSS as appropriate), the Commander of Forensic Services, or the Director of Administrative Services.

14 RECEIPTS

- 14.1 Meal receipts are not required for travel reimbursement. Employees claiming meal reimbursement should do so in compliance with their respective Collective Bargaining Agreements or State Red Book, whichever is governable (i.e., allowable amounts, time requirements, etc).
- 14.2 All other receipts must be submitted for reimbursement.

15 MILEAGE / MAPQUEST PRINT-OUTS

- 15.1 Employees claiming mileage reimbursement should do so in compliance with their respective Collective Bargaining Agreements or State Red Book, whichever is governable.
- 15.2 MOSES members are advised that their collective bargaining agreement allows reimbursement of an employee's transportation expenses for the distance between his/her home and his/her temporary assignment or between his/her regularly assigned office and his/her temporary assignment whichever is less.
- 15.3 In order to authenticate distances, point-to-point mileage reimbursement requests should include the odometer start, odometer stop, and mileage for each leg of the trip. The entry for each leg within a trip should include a description of the location (e.g., "crime scene", DA's Office", "Police Department", etc.).

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- 15.4 The Administrative Unit will independently verify the accuracy of mileage reimbursement requests and ensure that proper starting and ending points (i.e., home or work location) are being used in the reimbursement. To accomplish this, the employee should provide a print-out from MapQuest, Expedia, Yahoo!, or other internet mileage resource for each leg of the trip. The print-outs should include a copy of the first and last legs BOTH from/to the employee's home and from/to the employee's normal work assignment, so that the Administrative Unit can authenticate which one is shorter.
- 15.5 The Administrative Unit will compare the claimed point-to-point distance with the "internet mileage".
- If the difference is 10 miles or less, the point-to-point distance will be used for further calculations.
 - If the claimed point-to-point distance is greater than the "internet mileage" by 11 miles or more, the Administrative Unit will adjust the travel voucher before submitting it to the GHQ Fiscal Section.
- 15.6 Employees may submit mileage print-outs from internet resources alone, without reference to odometer readings, since these calculated distances generally underestimate the actual vehicular mileage.
- 15.7 Specific guidance is provided for instances when the employee travels to a Forensic Services Facility from a crime scene to secure evidence. In such cases, reimbursement will be provided for each leg of the trip, including home to crime scene, crime scene to Lab, Lab to home, as applicable. If the initial point of departure to the crime scene was the Lab, then the employee will be reimbursed for the trip from Lab to crime scene and back to Lab.
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16 COURSE EVALUATION FORMS

- 16.1 A Course Evaluation Form is a document requested by the Deputy Superintendent of the Department. All FSG employees attending approved training for which they received a TAF# should complete a Course Evaluation Form.
- 16.2 The Course Evaluation Form is a means for Management to ascertain if the training was of value, how information gathered will be disseminated to

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- staff, and whether the employee recommends that others attend the training.
- 16.3 Course Evaluation Forms are also used by the Quality Assurance Section to verify that an employee attended training. Certificates of the training should also be forwarded to the Quality Assurance Section, in addition to Course Evaluation Forms.
- 16.4 The Course Evaluation Form is available on Docushare in the Forensic Services area and is hyperlinked below in Section 17 References.
- 16.5 Employees should include a Course Evaluation Form with their travel reimbursement request (travel voucher) when the approved travel involved training.
- If the travel did not involve training, the employee should otherwise communicate with the Quality Assurance Section after the travel to verify the employee's attendance at the approved event, for quality assurance record-keeping purposes.
- 16.6 The Course Evaluation Forms are ultimately forwarded to the Deputy Superintendent by the Quality Assurance Section, following internal tracking.

17 REFERENCES

- 17.1 Travel Authorization Form (TAF)
- 17.2 Travel Endorsement Sheet (TES)
- 17.3 Travel Voucher
- 17.4 TAF 1
- 17.5 Course Evaluation Form
- 17.6 State Red Book

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